(b) if so, the percentage of trains being run through above-mentioned means, separately;

(c) whether any assessment has been made for operational expenditure on trains run through the above said means; and

(d) if so, the estimate of operational expenditure on each of the above-mentioned means, during the current year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) Yes, sir.

(b) For the year 1998-99 the percentage of freight and passenger traffic carried by steam, diesel and electric traction was as under:

	Passenger*	Freight
Steam	0.03	0.00
Diesel	56.38	40.60
Electric	43.59	59.40

* Excluding suburban trains.

(c) and (d) The assessment in operational expenditure of the trains run by the various modes of traction is made in the form of line haul cost. The line haul costs for passenger and goods services for diesel and electric traction (BG) in terms of rupees per thousand gross tonne kilometer for the year 97-98 (the latest year for which figures are available) are as under:

	Passenger	Freight
Diesel	115.18	80.59
Electric	138.46	76.61

Stream traction is the most uneconmomical mode of transport and has been phased out from main line operation.

Trains from Rishikesh to Delhi and Lucknow

† 1806. SHRI MANOHAR KANT DHYANI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering the demand for running of two trains from Rishikesh station in Northern Railway to Delhi and Lucknow; and

(b) if so, by when and if not, the reasons therefor?

†Original Notice of the Question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) No Sir,

(b) In view of availability of alternative services and operational and resource constraints, there is no proposal at present to introduce additional services on Rishikesh-Delhi/Lucknow sector.

Gauge Conversion in Tamil Nadu

1807. SHRI S. AGNIRAJ: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the status of gauge conversion in Tamil Nadu;

(b) whether it is a fact that the projects are going behind schedule;

(c) if so, what steps are being taken to improve the conversion projects;

(d) whether it is a fact that Tamil Nadu is being given a step-motherly treatment for funding these conversion projects; and

(e) what is the actual length of conversion which have been completed, as in December, 1999?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) In Tamil Nadu, gauge conversion of Dindigul-Tuticorin, Chennai-Tambaram-Trichy, Trichy-Thanjavur, Trichy-Dindigul, Arakkonam-Chengalpattu and Salem- Yashwantpur sections have been completed and gauge conversion work has been taken up on Katpadi-Villupuram, Villupuram-Pondicherry, Thanjavur-Nagore- Karaikal, Trichy-Manmadurai, Madurai-Rameshwaram, Quilon-Virudhungar-Tenkasi-Tirunelvelli-Tiruchendur. Further gauge conver- sion of Villupuram-Thaitjavur and Salem-Vriddhachalam-Cuddalore have been included in the Budget and will be taken up after obtaining necessary clearnances, action for which has been initiated.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) No, Sir. In fact, in 1999-2000, Rs. 149.50 cr. out of a total of Rs. 735 cr. viz. 20% of the total gauge conversion budget for Indian Railways has been allotted to gauge conversion projects in Tamil Nadu.